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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 ZAGREB 000127

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR (BOGUE AND BRADTKE), EUR/RPM (BAME) AND
EUR/SCE (NARDI)
NSC FOR FRIED AND TEPPER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/17/2013

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PARM](#) [HR](#) [AL](#) [PARM](#) [HR](#) [AL](#) [NATO](#) [NATO](#)

SUBJECT: CROATIA EAGER TO MOVE FORWARD TO SIGN ADRIATIC
CHARTER FOR NATO WITH ALBANIA AND MACEDONIA

REF: 02 ZAGREB 2278

CLASSIFIED BY: POLOFF A.F.GODFREY FOR REASONS 1.5 (B,D)

SUMMARY

1. (C) THE ATTITUDE OF OFFICIALS IN THE GOC TOWARD THE
"ADRIATIC CHARTER," AS PROMOTED BY BRUCE JACKSON, HAS BECOME
SHARPLY MORE POSITIVE. CROATIA IS NOW PREPARING TO
PARTICIPATE IN A DRAFTING SESSION WITH ALBANIA AND MACEDONIA
AND LOOKS TO SEND ITS FOREIGN MINISTER TO WASHINGTON FOR A
SIGNING CEREMONY WITH SECRETARY POWELL IN EARLY APRIL.
JACKSON REPORTEDLY TOLD FM PICULA ON JANUARY 15 THAT THE
CHARTER HAS THE FULL SUPPORT OF THE "HIGHEST LEVELS" OF THE
USG. CROATIA HOPES THAT COOPERATION OF THE "ADRIATIC THREE"
WILL IMPROVE ITS CHANCES FOR AN EARLY INVITATION FOR FULL
NATO MEMBERSHIP. END SUMMARY.

2. (C) ON JANUARY 17, WE MET WITH ZORAN MILANOVIC, HEAD OF
THE MFA'S DEPARTMENT FOR INTERNATIONAL SECURITY AND ALSO THE
CHAIR OF THE GOC INTERAGENCY WORKING GROUP ON IMPLEMENTATION
OF NATO'S MAP, TO GET A READ-OUT ON THE JANUARY 15 VISIT TO
ZAGREB OF BRUCE JACKSON, PRESIDENT OF THE PROJECT ON
TRANSITIONAL DEMOCRACIES. JACKSON'S VISIT WAS LOW-PROFILE;
HE SOUGHT TO AVOID THE UNHELPFUL DEBATE IN THE CROATIAN PRESS
THAT FOLLOWED HIS SEPTEMBER 2002 VISIT TO ZAGREB (REF).

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3. (C) MILANOVIC SAID JACKSON ASSERTED TO FOREIGN MINISTER
PICULA THAT THE IDEA OF THE ADRIATIC CHARTER HAS THE FULL
SUPPORT OF THE "HIGHEST LEVELS" OF THE USG, PARTICULARLY OF
THE NSC AND SPECIFICALLY OF NATIONAL SECURITY ADVISER DR.
RICE. JACKSON DESCRIBED THE JANUARY 10 DINNER HOSTED BY THE
ALBANIAN AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON, ATTENDED BY THE CROATIAN
AND MACEDONIAN AMBASSADORS AND ALSO BY KEY SENIOR USG
POLICYMAKERS, AS AN AFFIRMATION OF THE USG'S SUPPORT FOR HIS
EFFORT TO PUSH THE ADRIATIC CHARTER FORWARD. WHILE MILANOVIC
UNDERSTANDS THAT JACKSON IS NOT A GOVERNMENT OFFICIAL, HE IS
CONVINCED THAT JACKSON IS ACTING ON BEHALF OF THE USG IN THIS
MATTER.

4. (C) MILANOVIC SAID THAT THE LEVEL OF RECEPTIVENESS TO THE
IDEA OF GROUPING TOGETHER THE REMAINING "CONTINUING
ASPIRANTS" INTO THE "ADRIATIC THREE" IS GAINING SUPPORT
WITHIN THE CROATIAN GOVERNMENT. GOC OFFICIALS HAVE COME
AROUND TO JACKSON'S REASONING THAT IT IS EASIER TO GET THE
ATTENTION OF WASHINGTON -- AND OTHER CAPITALS IN THE ALLIANCE
-- WITH THREE FOREIGN MINISTERS ACTING TOGETHER RATHER THAN
SEPARATELY. CONVINCING THE CROATIAN PUBLIC WILL BE A MUCH
MORE DIFFICULT TASK. THE PUBLIC -- AND MANY OPINION LEADERS
-- WILL CONTINUE TO RESIST ANY SORT OF REGIONAL GROUPING,
ESPECIALLY IF IT SMACKS OF RE-CREATING THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA.

5. (C) MILANOVIC SAID THAT FOREIGN MINISTER PICULA AND
JACKSON AGREED TO A COURSE OF EVENTS WHICH SHOULD LEAD TO THE
SIGNING OF AN "ADRIATIC CHARTER" IN WASHINGTON IN APRIL. THE
FIRST EVENT IS A MEETING OF POLITICAL DIRECTORS IN SKOPJE ON
JANUARY 23 (MILANOVIC WILL LEAD CROATIA'S DELEGATION). THE

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SKOPJE MEETING WAS ORIGINALLY BILLED AS A DRAFTING SESSION,
BUT MILANOVIC CLAIMS IT IS TOO EARLY IN THE PROCESS TO DRAFT.
HE EXPECTS POLITICAL DIRECTORS TO AGREE ON BASIC ELEMENTS
FROM WHICH A DRAFT CAN BE PUT TOGETHER LATER. IN MARCH, ONCE
A TEXT IS NEAR COMPLETION, THE "A-THREE" FOREIGN MINISTERS
(MILANOVIC IS ALREADY USING THE MONIKER) WILL MEET IN
DUBROVNIK TO AGREE ON A FINAL DRAFT.

6. (C) ONCE A DRAFT CHARTER IS AGREED UPON AMONG THE THREE,
THE FOREIGN MINISTERS WILL TRAVEL TO WASHINGTON FOR A SIGNING
CEREMONY. MILANOVIC SAID JACKSON ASSURED HIM SECRETARY
POWELL WILL SIGN THE CHARTER WITH THE THREE FOREIGN
MINISTERS. AFTER THE SIGNING CEREMONY, JACKSON TOLD PICULA
THAT THERE WOULD BE A PHOTO OPPORTUNITY WITH VICE PRESIDENT
CHENEY.

7. (C) IN A SHARP SHIFT FROM VIEWS EXPRESSED JUST FOUR

MONTHS EARLIER, MILANOVIC SAID CROATIA WOULD WELCOME THE PARTICIPATION OF OTHER STATES IN THE REGION, AND EVEN SAID THAT IF OTHER STATES, INCLUDING BOSNIA AND YUGOSLAVIA WANT TO JOIN THE ADRIATIC GROUP, "SO MUCH THE BETTER." MILANOVIC SAID CROATIA UNDERSTANDS HOW IMPORTANT THE ADRIATIC CHARTER COULD BE TO CROATIA'S FUTURE. MILANOVIC ALSO KNOWS HOW IMPORTANT CROATIA'S PARTICIPATION IN THE CHARTER IS FOR

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ACTION EUR-00

INFO	LOG-00	NP-00	AF-00	AID-00	CIAE-00	DODE-00	DOEE-00
	SRPP-00	DS-00	VC-00	H-01	TEDE-00	INR-00	IO-00
	LAB-01	L-00	VCE-00	AC-01	DCP-01	NRRC-00	NSAE-00
	OIC-02	PA-00	PM-00	PRS-00	ACE-00	P-00	SCT-00
	SP-00	IRM-00	SSO-00	SS-00	TRSE-00	T-00	USIE-00
	SSD-00	PMB-00	DSCC-00	PRM-00	DRL-02	G-00	SSR-00
	NFAT-00	SAS-00	SWCI-00	/008W			

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FM AMEMBASSY ZAGREB
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9235
INFO NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
USMISSION USNATO IMMEDIATE
AMEMBASSY BELGRADE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SKOPJE PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY SOFIA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY TIRANA PRIORITY

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JACKSON'S SUCCESS. MILANOVIC SAID JACKSON GAVE FM PICULA THE
HARD SELL, BUT SUCCEEDED.

COMMENT

18. (C) CROATIA'S NEW READINESS TO ACCEPT JACKSON'S IDEA OF AN ADRIATIC CHARTER REFLECTS A SOBER, MATURING UNDERSTANDING OF WHERE ITS CANDIDACY FOR NATO MEMBERSHIP STANDS POST-PRAGUE. CROATIA DIDN'T LIKE THE ARGUMENTS JACKSON PUT FORWARD IN SEPTEMBER FAVORING A NEW GROUPING OF CANDIDATES, BUT THAT DIDN'T CHANGE THE FACT THAT THE ARGUMENTS WERE CONVINCING. NOW THE GOC -- AT LEAST AT SENIOR LEVELS -- HAS BEGUN TO COME AROUND. BUT THE RACAN GOVERNMENT HAS SO FAR NOT EVEN BEGUN TO PRESENT THE IDEA OF A CHARTER TO THE PUBLIC, THERE WILL ALMOST CERTAINLY BE RESISTANCE TO ALIGNING CROATIA WITH OTHER STATES OF THE FORMER YUGOSLAVIA, AND -- IN CONTRAST TO OTHER CANDIDATES -- JACKSON IS STILL NOT YET ENJOYING SUSTAINED ACCESS TO GOC LEADERS.
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